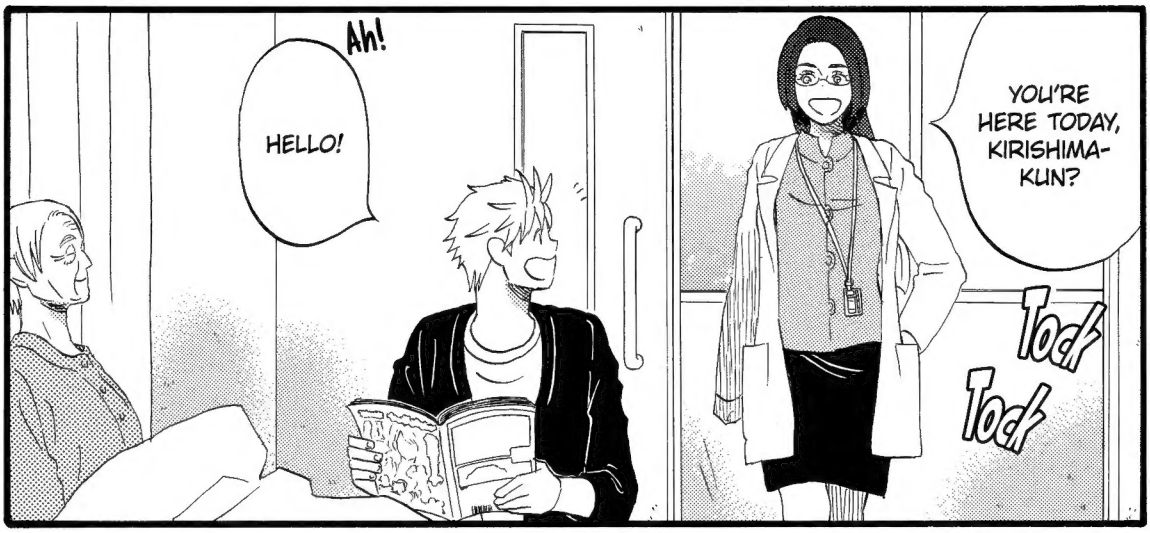
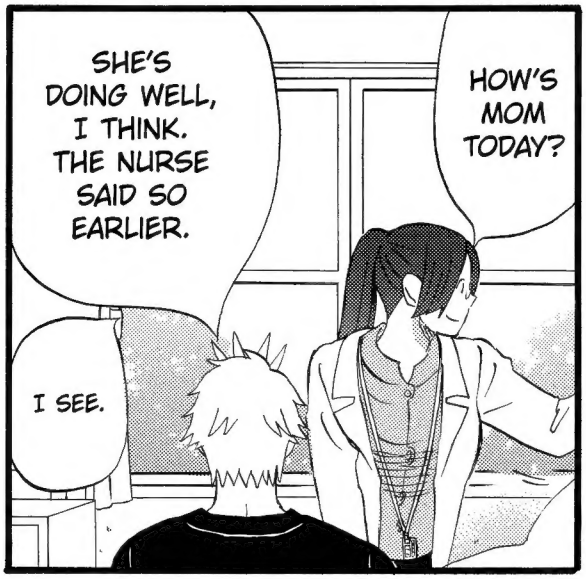
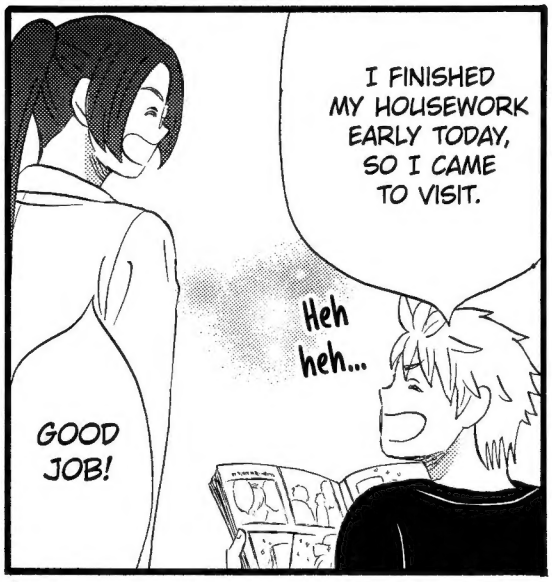
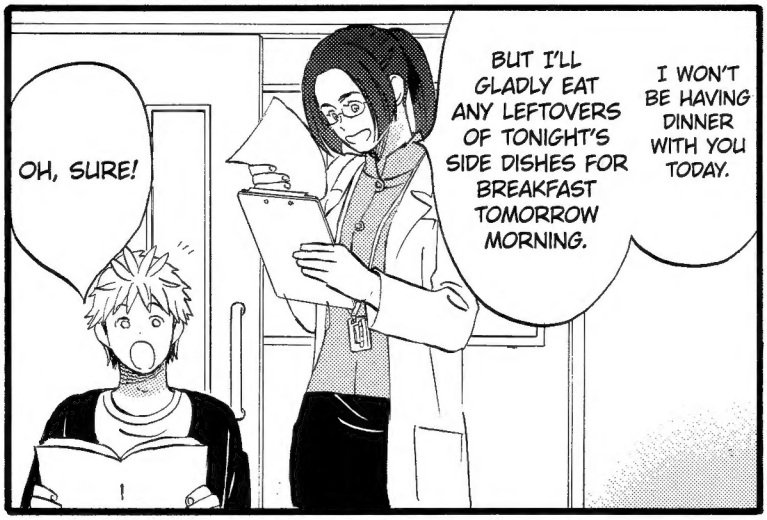
Chapter 21: Ishimura-san and Drinking Party

SAIGA GENERAL HOSPITAL
OH!

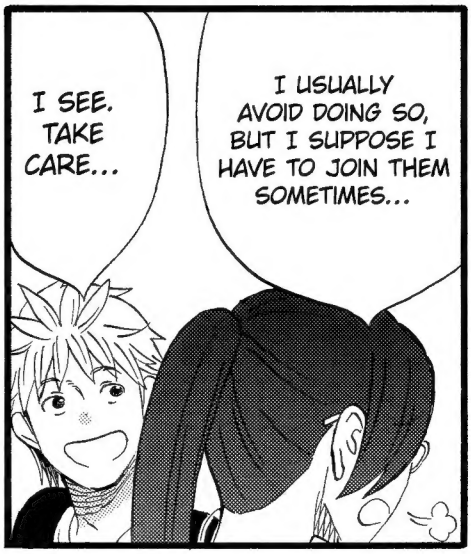

Ah!
HELLO!
YOU'RE HERE TODAY, KIRISHIMA-KUN?
Tock
Tock


HOW'S MOM TODAY?
SHE'S DOING WELL, I THINK. THE NURSE SAID SO EARLIER.
I SEE.


I FINISHED MY HOUSEWORK EARLY TODAY, SO I CAME TO VISIT.
Heh heh...
GOOD JOB!


OH, SURE!
BUT I'LL GLADLY EAT ANY LEFTOVERS OF TONIGHT'S SIDE DISHES FOR BREAKFAST TOMORROW MORNING.
I WON'T BE HAVING DINNER WITH YOU TODAY.

HM?
ACTUALLY, I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE. I WAS ABOUT TO TEXT YOU.

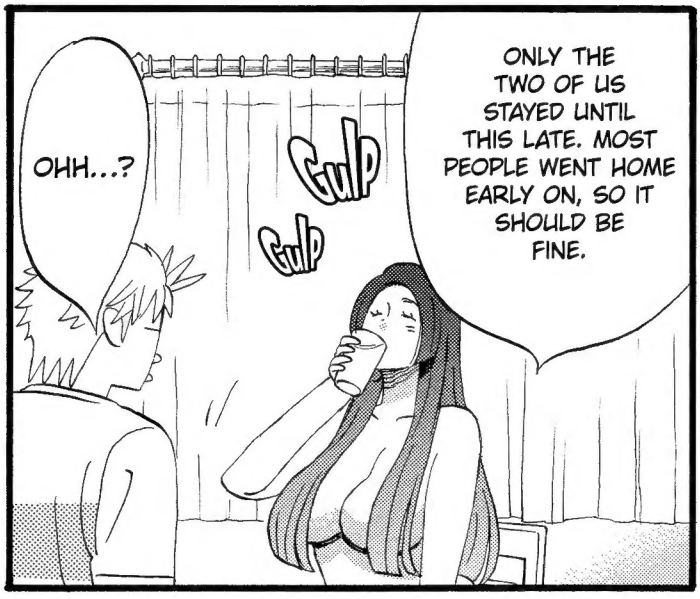

I SEE. TAKE CARE...
I USUALLY AVOID DOING SO, BUT I SUPPOSE I HAVE TO JOIN THEM SOMETIMES...

IT'S NOT THAT. I HAVE TO GO OUT DRINKING WITH MY COWORKERS.
WHAT'S THE OCCASION? A WELCOME PARTY?

AWOOO...

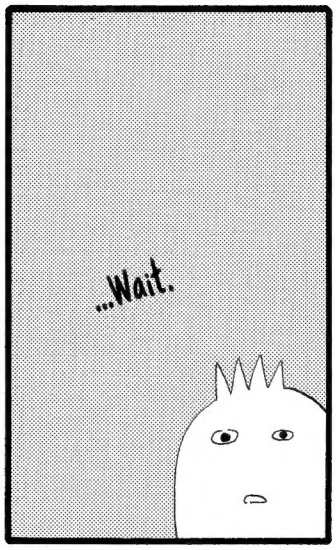
Fwump
I'M HOOOME...
HIC!
Vardak
Slam
PHEW...
...WHOA!
YOU'RE STILL AWAKE?
...
THAT'S RIGHT! IT'S ALREADY MORNING!
IT'S THREE IN THE MORNING.
I WAS WORRIED, YOU KNOW? NO WAY I COULD SLEEP!
3:21
DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?

IT'S A PROBLEM FOR ME IF YOU AREN'T A BIT MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT THE HOURS!
I SEE. MY BAD.
A SIMPLE "I'M GOING TO BE LATE" ISN'T ENOUGH!
BUT I TEXTED YOU THAT I WAS COMING HOME LATE!
Here. Dirty clothes.


OHH...?
Gulp
Gulp
ONLY THE TWO OF US STAYED UNTIL THIS LATE. MOST PEOPLE WENT HOME EARLY ON, SO IT SHOULD BE FINE.

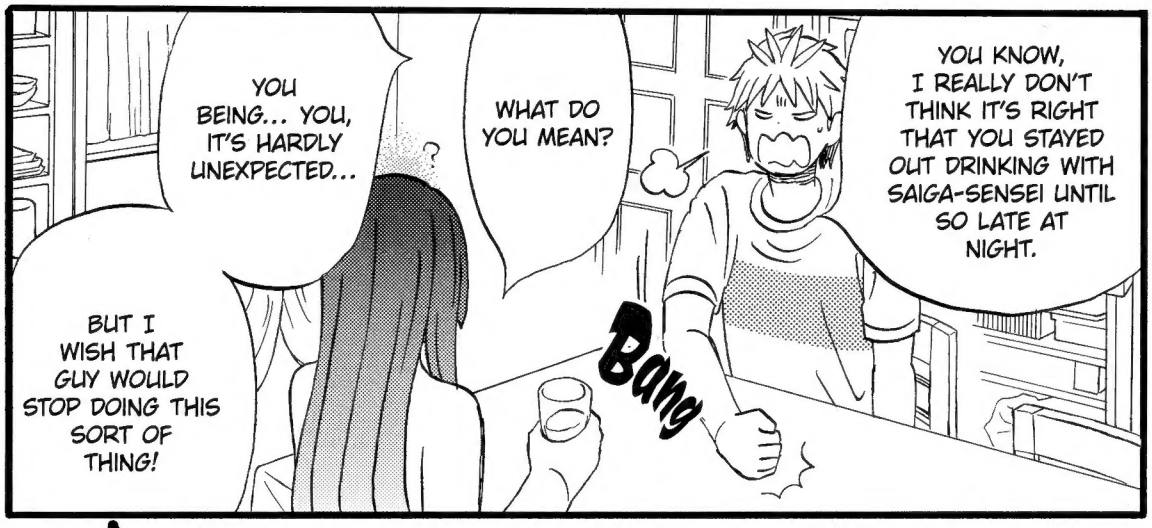
DON'T YOU GUYS HAVE WORK TOMORROW? HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET UP IN THE MORNING AFTER STAYING OUT SO LATE DRINKING?
Here's some tea!
Thud

YEAH.
HE WANTED TO CONSULT ME ABOUT SOMETHING.
DID YOU STAY OUT DRINKING UNTIL THIS LATE WITH ONE OF THE DOCTORS?
Huh...?
Huh...?
"THE TWO OF US?"

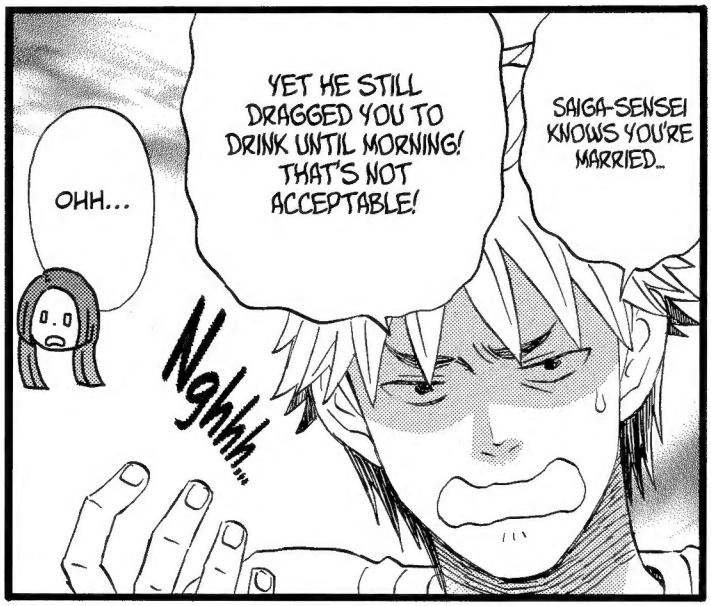

...Wait.

I'M FAR FROM BEING ONE.
OHH! KIRISHIMA-KUN, ARE YOU A PSYCHIC?!
Amazing!
IT WAS SAIGA-SENSEI, RIGHT?

URGH... SAY NO MORE. I ALREADY KNOW WHO YOU WERE WITH!
BUT HE SAID IT HAD TO BE IN PRIVATE.
Whew... I drank a lot...

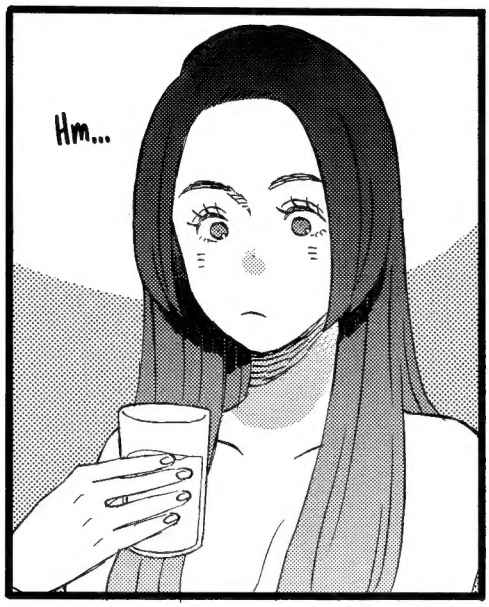

YOU BEING... YOU, IT'S HARDLY UNEXPECTED...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU KNOW, I REALLY DON'T THINK IT'S RIGHT THAT YOU STAYED OUT DRINKING WITH SAIGA-SENSEI UNTIL SO LATE AT NIGHT.
BUT I WISH THAT GUY WOULD STOP DOING THIS SORT OF THING!
Bang

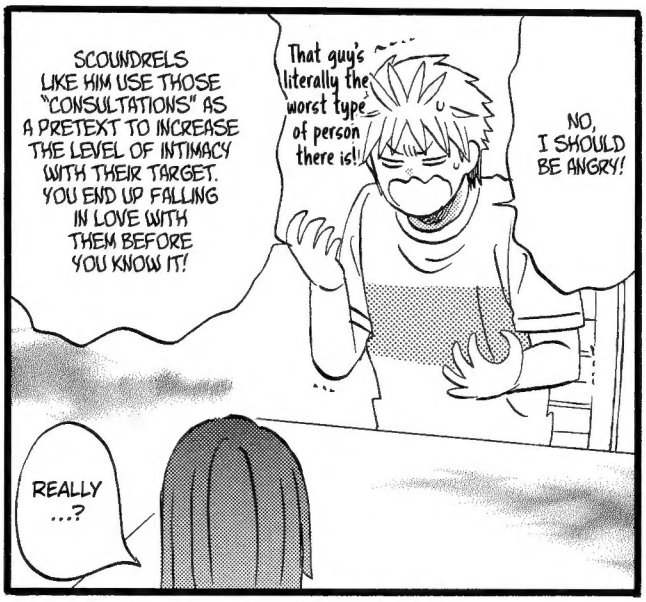
IT'S NOT?
OF COURSE IT'S NOT!!
GAAAH!


OHH...
YET HE STILL DRAGGED YOU TO DRINK UNTIL MORNING! THAT'S NOT ACCEPTABLE!
SAIGA-SENSEI KNOWS YOU'RE MARRIED...
Nghhh...

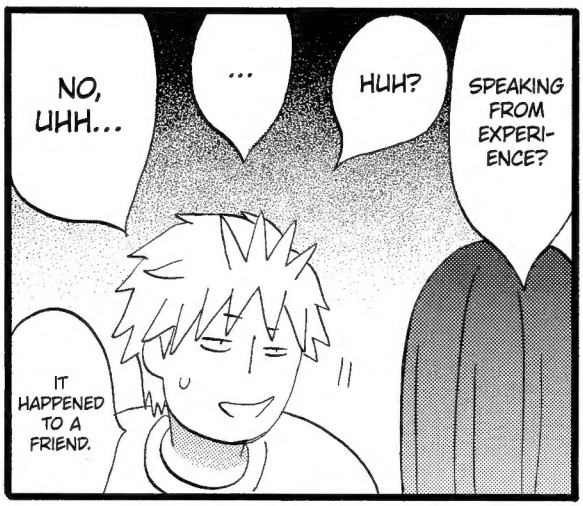
HE JUST WANTED TO ASK ME FOR ADVICE. YOU DON'T NEED TO BE THAT ANGRY.
...
SO DAMN GREEDY!
I swear!
RAAWR!

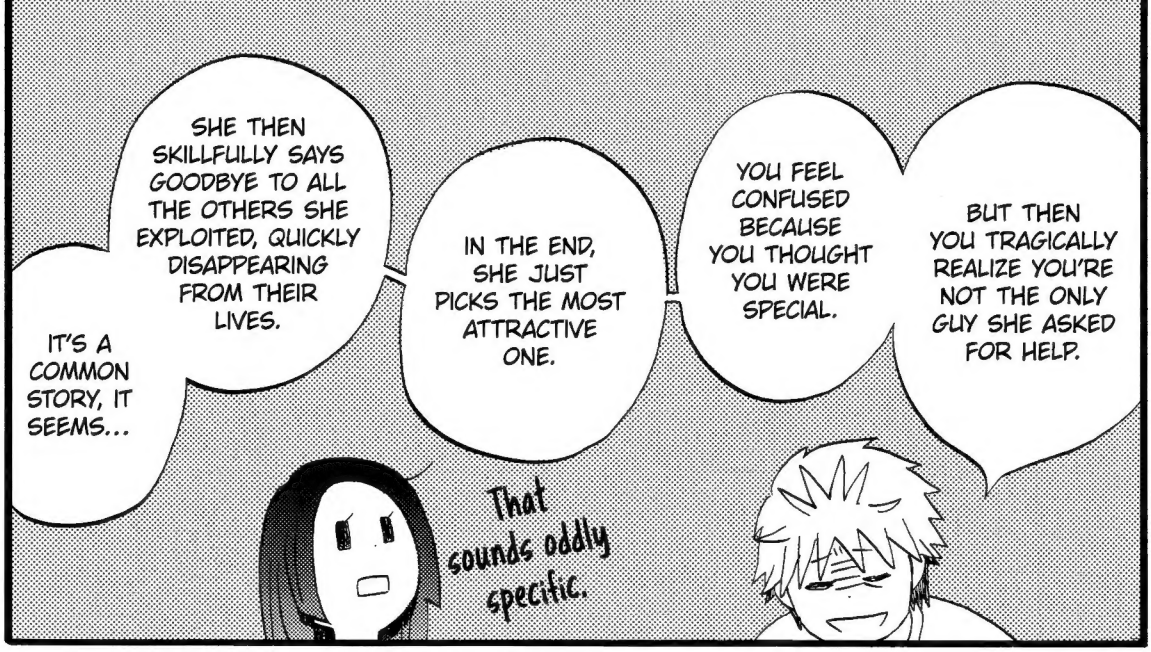
HE'S ALREADY HANDSOME, A DOCTOR AND THE HEIR OF A HOSPITAL!
SHIT...! "PRIVATE CONSULTATION," MY ASS...!
AND YET, HE STILL WANTS MORE?!
I'M SORRY FOR BEING SO BLESSED...


Hm...

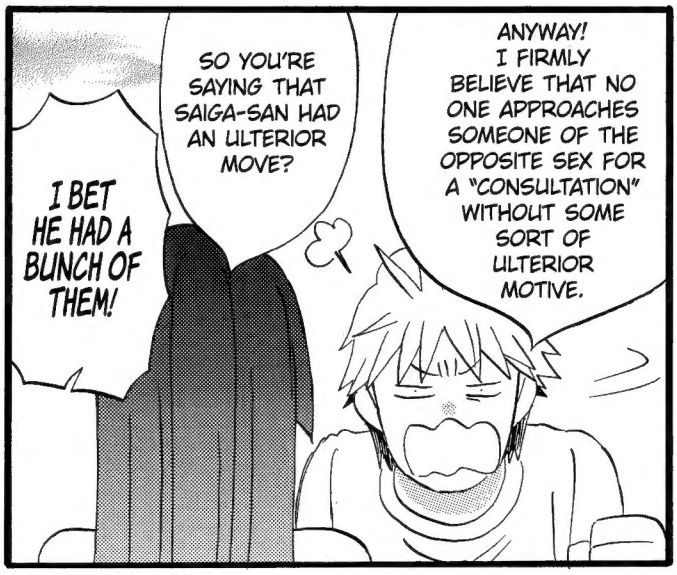

SCOUNDRELS LIKE HIM USE THOSE "CONSULTATIONS" AS A PRETEXT TO INCREASE THE LEVEL OF INTIMACY WITH THEIR TARGET. YOU END UP FALLING IN LOVE WITH THEM BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!
That guy's literally the worst type of person there is!
NO, I SHOULD BE ANGRY!
REALLY ...?

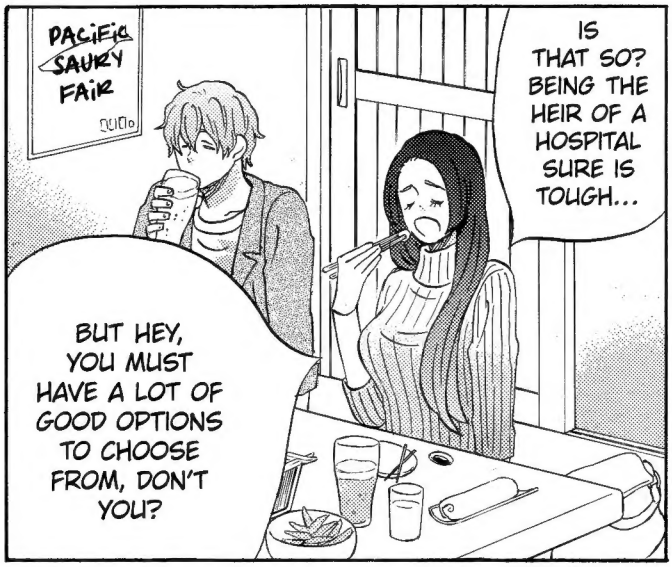
SHE'S SWEET AND RELIES ON YOU, SO YOU DO YOUR BEST FOR HER, AND FEELINGS OF LOVE ARISE.
SHE STARTS BY TELLING YOU ABOUT HER PROBLEMS, AND THAT SHE NEEDS YOUR HELP.


NO, UHH...
...
HUH?
SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE?
IT HAPPENED TO A FRIEND.

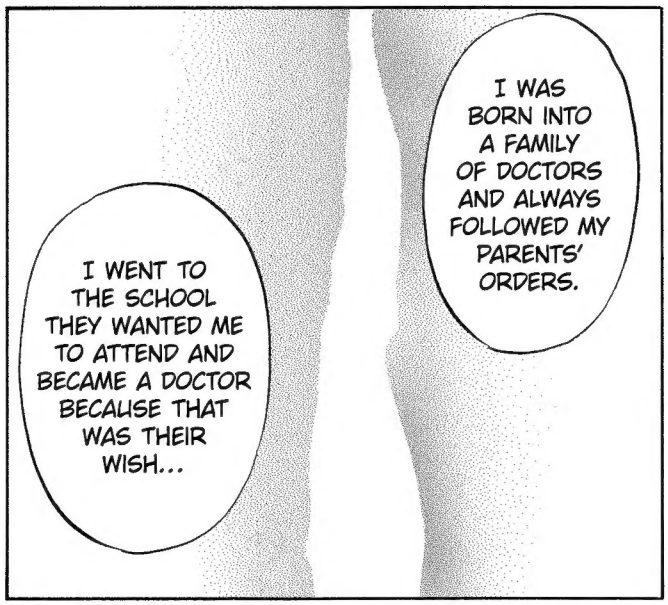

IT'S A COMMON STORY, IT SEEMS...
SHE THEN SKILLFULLY SAYS GOODBYE TO ALL THE OTHERS SHE EXPLOITED, QUICKLY DISAPPEARING FROM THEIR LIVES.
IN THE END, SHE JUST PICKS THE MOST ATTRACTIVE ONE.
YOU FEEL CONFUSED BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE SPECIAL.
BUT THEN YOU TRAGICALLY REALIZE YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY GUY SHE ASKED FOR HELP.
That sounds oddly specific.

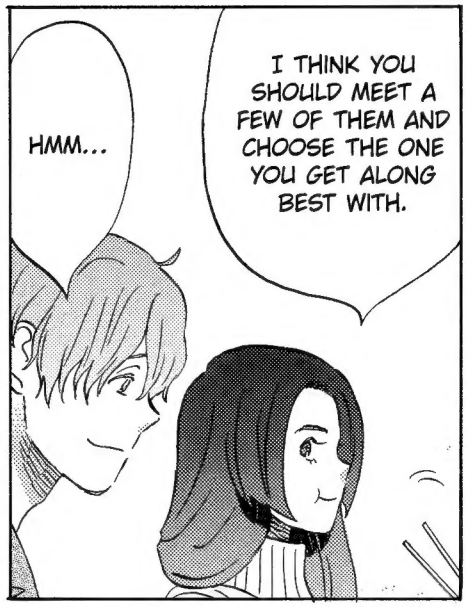
HMM, WELL...
ANYWAY, WHAT KIND OF ADVICE DID HE WANT?


I BET HE HAD A BUNCH OF THEM!
SO YOU'RE SAYING THAT SAIGA-SAN HAD AN ULTERIOR MOVE?
ANYWAY! I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT NO ONE APPROACHES SOMEONE OF THE OPPOSITE SEX FOR A "CONSULTATION" WITHOUT SOME SORT OF ULTERIOR MOTIVE.

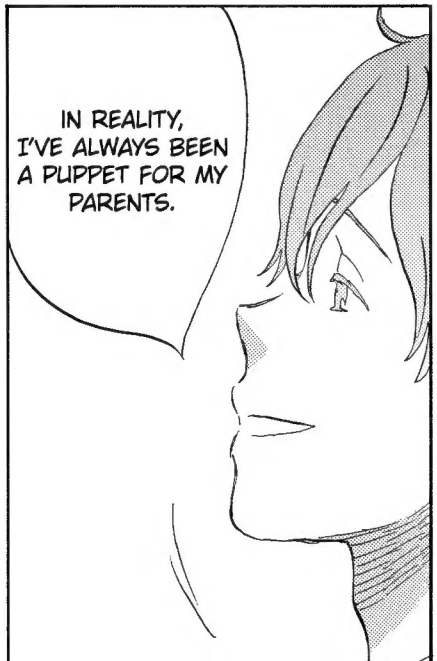

PACIFIC SAURY FAIR
IS THAT SO? BEING THE HEIR OF A HOSPITAL SURE IS TOUGH...
BUT HEY, YOU MUST HAVE A LOT OF GOOD OPTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM, DON'T YOU?

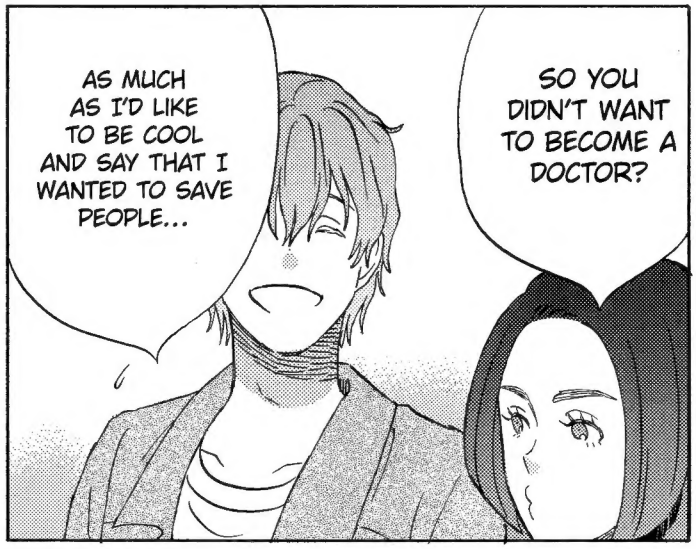
YOU SEE, I'M BEING URGED TO GO ON SOME ARRANGED DATES IN HOPES OF FINDING A MARRIAGE PARTNER...

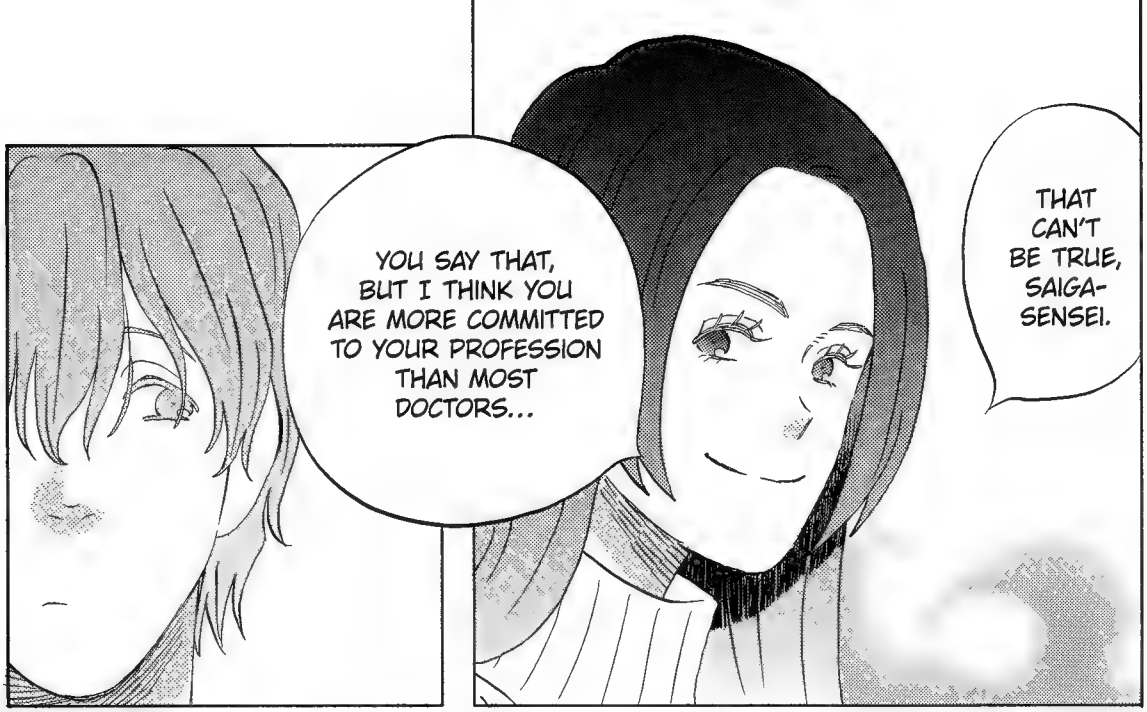

I WAS BORN INTO A FAMILY OF DOCTORS AND ALWAYS FOLLOWED MY PARENTS' ORDERS.
I WENT TO THE SCHOOL THEY WANTED ME TO ATTEND AND BECAME A DOCTOR BECAUSE THAT WAS THEIR WISH...


I THINK YOU SHOULD MEET A FEW OF THEM AND CHOOSE THE ONE YOU GET ALONG BEST WITH.
HMM...

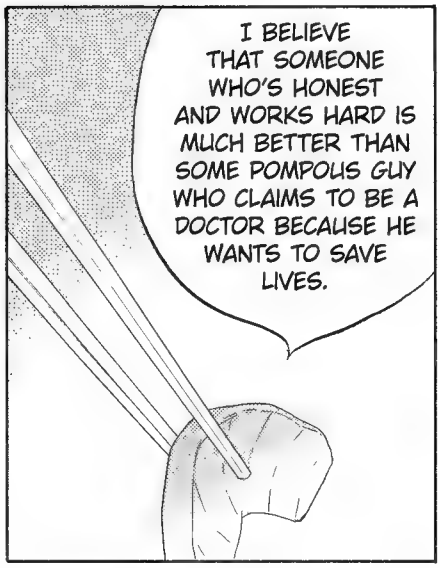
I'VE ALWAYS DONE WHAT THEY TOLD ME TO DO, SO AT THE VERY LEAST...
WHEN IT COMES TO THE PERSON I MARRY, I WANT TO BE TRUE TO MY OWN FEELINGS.
I SEE...


IN REALITY, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A PUPPET FOR MY PARENTS.


SO YOU DIDN'T WANT TO BECOME A DOCTOR?
AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO BE COOL AND SAY THAT I WANTED TO SAVE PEOPLE...

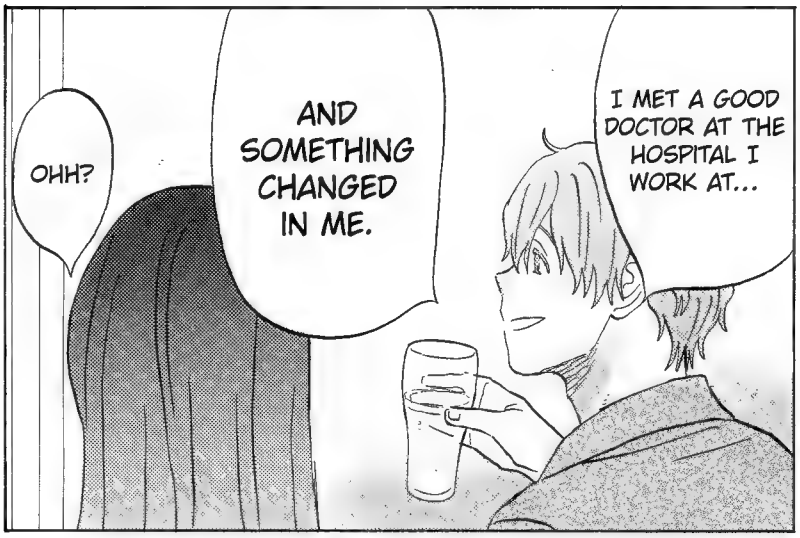

YOU SAY THAT, BUT I THINK YOU ARE MORE COMMITTED TO YOUR PROFESSION THAN MOST DOCTORS...
THAT CAN'T BE TRUE, SAIGA-SENSEI.

A PUPPET WOULDN'T TAKE YOUR JOB AS SERIOUSLY AS YOU DO.


I BELIEVE THAT SOMEONE WHO'S HONEST AND WORKS HARD IS MUCH BETTER THAN SOME POMPOUS GUY WHO CLAIMS TO BE A DOCTOR BECAUSE HE WANTS TO SAVE LIVES.

I THOUGHT BECOMING A DOCTOR WAS SOME SORT OF GOAL.
REALLY?
...I WASN'T ALWAYS COMMITTED, YOU KNOW?

I WAS ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT DOING WELL ENOUGH.
IN RETROSPECT, I WAS JUST GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS AND COASTING.
AFTER I ACHIEVED IT, I ONLY PUT FORTH A MODERATE AMOUNT OF EFFORT TO REACH A HIGHER POSITION.


OHH?
AND SOMETHING CHANGED IN ME.
I MET A GOOD DOCTOR AT THE HOSPITAL I WORK AT...

BUT THEN...

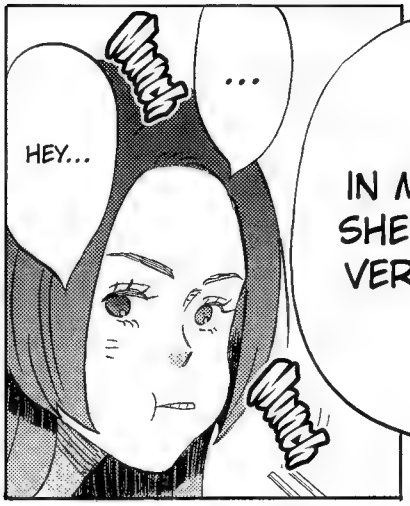
...
AT A CERTAIN DOCTORS' GATHERING LIKE THE ONE WE HAD TODAY, SHE SHOWED ME THAT THERE IS MORE THAN ONE VALID REASON TO BECOME A DOCTOR.

AND HAS A HABIT OF NOT ALLOWING OTHERS TO GET CLOSE TO HER. HOWEVER...
SHE IS A FAIR BIT ECCENTRIC...

"I WANTED A JOB THAT WOULD MAKE MY HEART RACE."

WHEN ASKED ABOUT IT, EVERYONE RESPONDED THAT THEY BECAME DOCTORS TO SAVE THE LIVES OF THOSE DEAR TO THEM...
WHICH IS AS VALID A REASON AS IT IS PREDICTABLE. BUT THEN...

HER GOAL WASN'T TO SAVE PEOPLE'S LIVES...
I FELT THAT SHE WAS SOMEWHAT INSOLENT, AND YET...
THE WAY SHE PRESENTED BEING A DOCTOR AS JUST ONE OF MANY POSSIBLE CAREER OPTIONS STRUCK ME AS GALLANT AND GRACEFUL.


...
HEY...
Munch
Munch

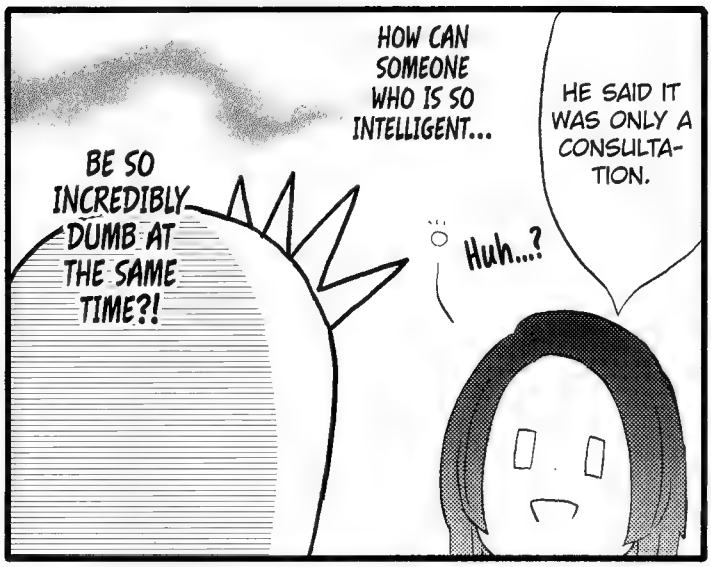
IN MY EYES, SHE LOOKED VERY COOL.
IN FACT, I SENSED THAT SHE WAS HIGHLY PRO-FESSIONAL.

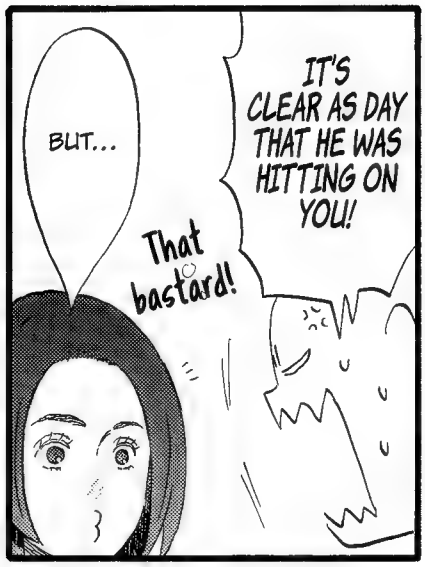
WHEN I MET YOU, ISHIMURA-SENSEI, I REALIZED FOR THE FIRST TIME WHAT IT MEANT TO BE A DOCTOR.

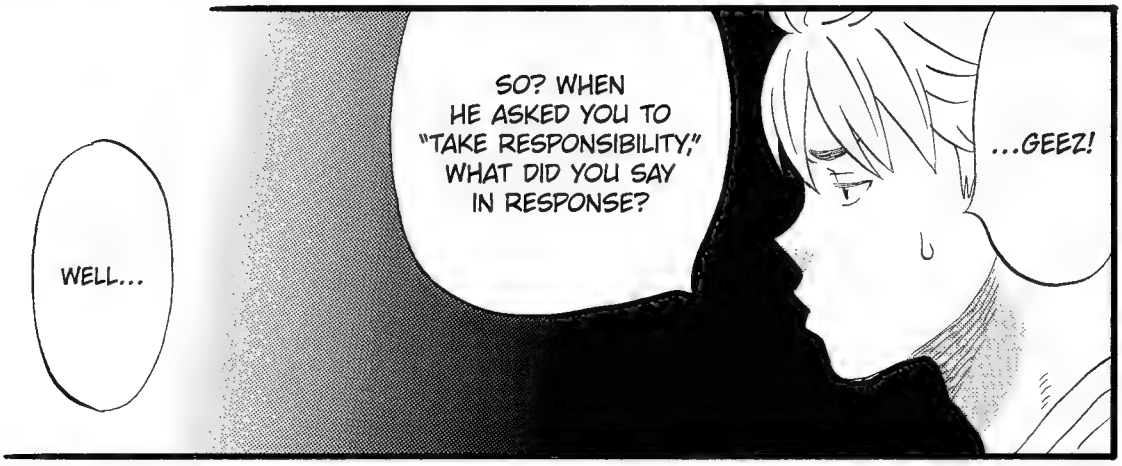
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT ME, RIGHT?
HA HA HA! THAT'S RIGHT!
I remember saying something like that...

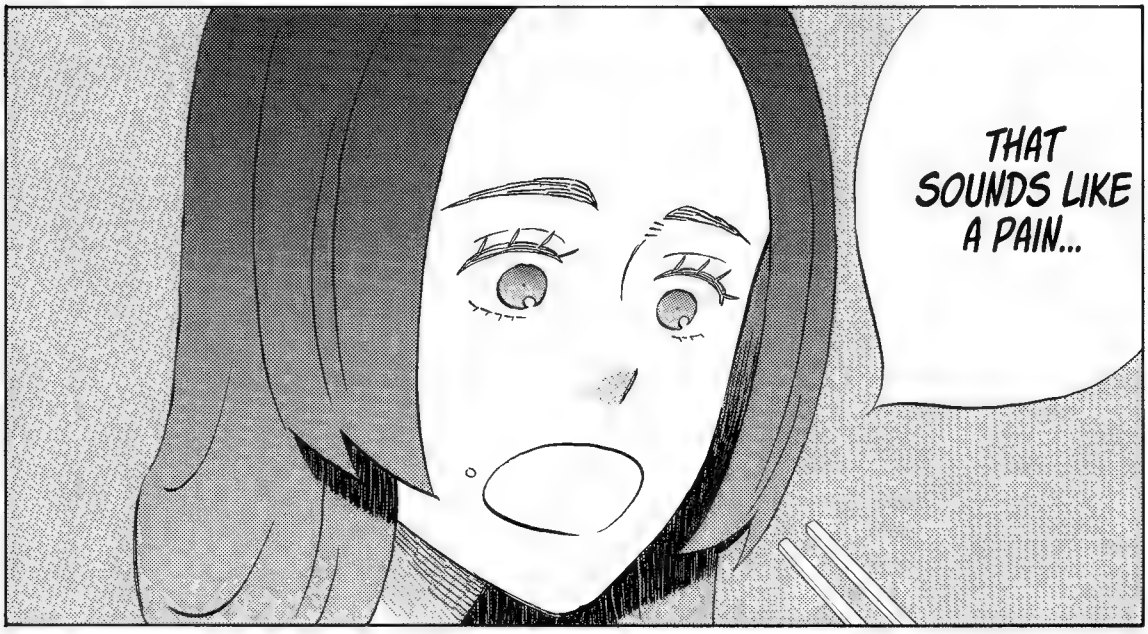
IT'S BECAUSE I MET A WONDERFUL WOMAN LIKE YOU...
THAT MY HEART WON'T MOVE IN ANYONE ELSE'S DIRECTION...

HONESTLY, I WISH YOU WOULD TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS.
...LIKE HELL THAT'S A CONSULTATION!!!


HOW CAN SOMEONE WHO IS SO INTELLIGENT...
BE SO INCREDIBLY DUMB AT THE SAME TIME?!
HE SAID IT WAS ONLY A CONSULTATION.
Huh...?

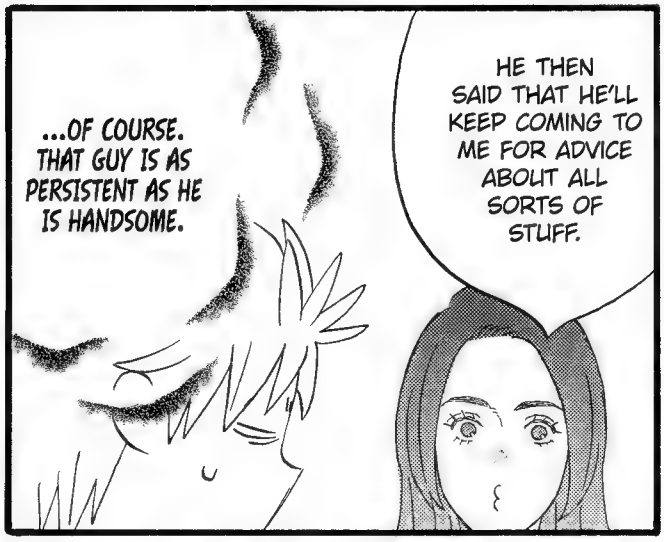

BUT...
IT'S CLEAR AS DAY THAT HE WAS HITTING ON YOU!
That bastard!


WELL...
SO? WHEN HE ASKED YOU TO "TAKE RESPONSIBILITY," WHAT DID YOU SAY IN RESPONSE?
...GEEZ!

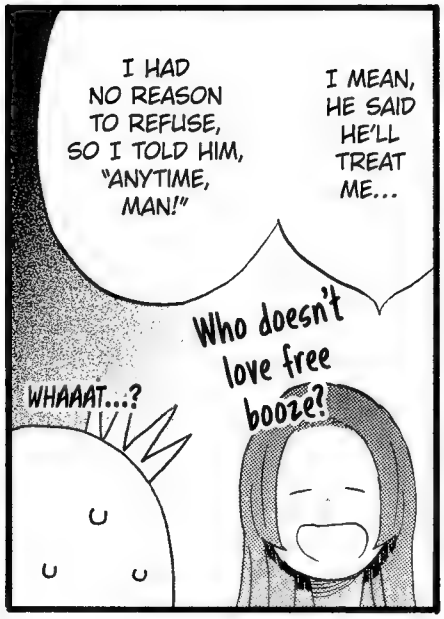

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A PAIN...

WOW... I CAN PRACTICALLY HEAR THE SOUND OF HIS HEART BREAKING.
HOWEVER ...
Ha ha ha!
BUT HEY, CHEER UP. I KNOW YOU'LL MEET THE RIGHT PERSON ONE DAY!
SMACK

HUH?
Geez!
I HOPE YOU TURN DOWN HIS FUTURE INVITATIONS...


...OF COURSE. THAT GUY IS AS PERSISTENT AS HE IS HANDSOME.
HE THEN SAID THAT HE'LL KEEP COMING TO ME FOR ADVICE ABOUT ALL SORTS OF STUFF.

NO MATTER HOW DENSE ISHIMURA-SAN IS, I CAN'T SHAKE THIS FEELING OF INSECURITY...!
UGHH...
IT'S NOT BECAUSE THAT GUY'S HANDSOME OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT...


I HAD NO REASON TO REFUSE, SO I TOLD HIM, "ANYTIME, MAN!"
I MEAN, HE SAID HE'LL TREAT ME...
Who doesn't love free booze?
WHAAAT...?

I GET THE IMPRESSION THAT THINGS BETWEEN US WILL BE OVER PRETTY QUICKLY...!

I'm a weirdo!

IT'S JUST, IF HE PRESENTS ISHIMURA-SAN WITH A REASON THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH TO CONVINCE HER...

YOU'RE A REAL BEAUTY WITH A ROCKIN' HOT BOD.

HUH...?

I KNOW... WHAT ABOUT IT?

HM?

ISHIMURA-SAN...

IF THAT GUY'S WILLING TO HIT ON HER SO OPENLY, THEN I SHOULD MAKE MY MOVE AS WELL.

And...

THAT'S WHY...

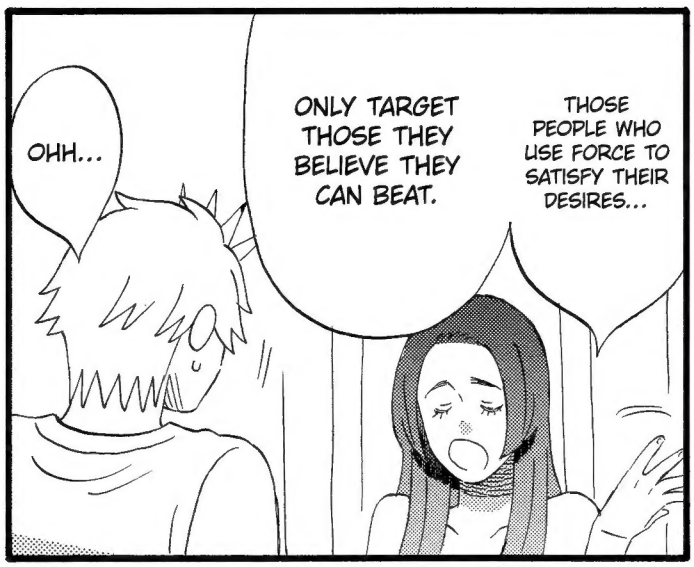
THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKELY.

HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

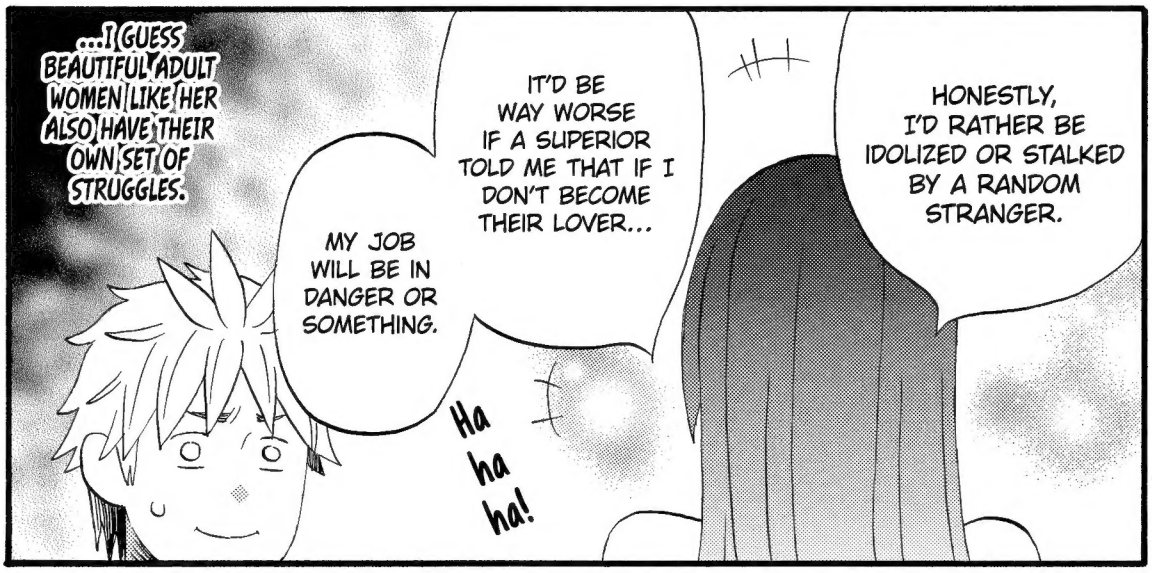
IF MY BEAUTIFUL WIFE STAYS OUT UNTIL SO LATE AT NIGHT...

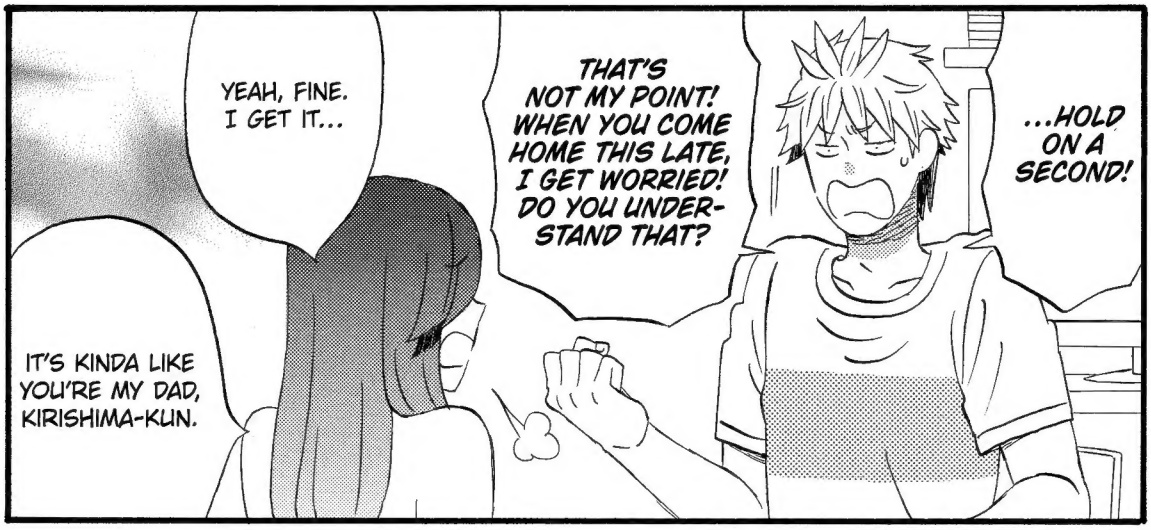
I FEAR SHE'LL BECOME ENSNARED IN A SEX CRIME.

OHH...


OHH...
ONLY TARGET THOSE THEY BELIEVE THEY CAN BEAT.
THOSE PEOPLE WHO USE FORCE TO SATISFY THEIR DESIRES...

MOLESTERS AND HOODLUMS TYPICALLY TARGET PEOPLE WHO SEEM FRAIL AND MEEK.
BECAUSE I LOOK THREATENING.

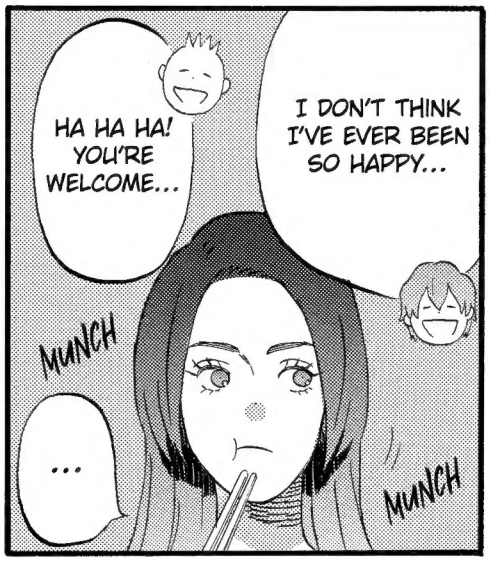

...I GUESS BEAUTIFUL ADULT WOMEN LIKE HER ALSO HAVE THEIR OWN SET OF STRUGGLES.
MY JOB WILL BE IN DANGER OR SOMETHING.
IT'D BE WAY WORSE IF A SUPERIOR TOLD ME THAT IF I DON'T BECOME THEIR LOVER...
Ha ha ha!
HONESTLY, I'D RATHER BE IDOLIZED OR STALKED BY A RANDOM STRANGER.


YEAH, FINE. I GET IT...
IT'S KINDA LIKE YOU'RE MY DAD, KIRISHIMA-KUN.
THAT'S NOT MY POINT! WHEN YOU COME HOME THIS LATE, I GET WORRIED! DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?
...HOLD ON A SECOND!

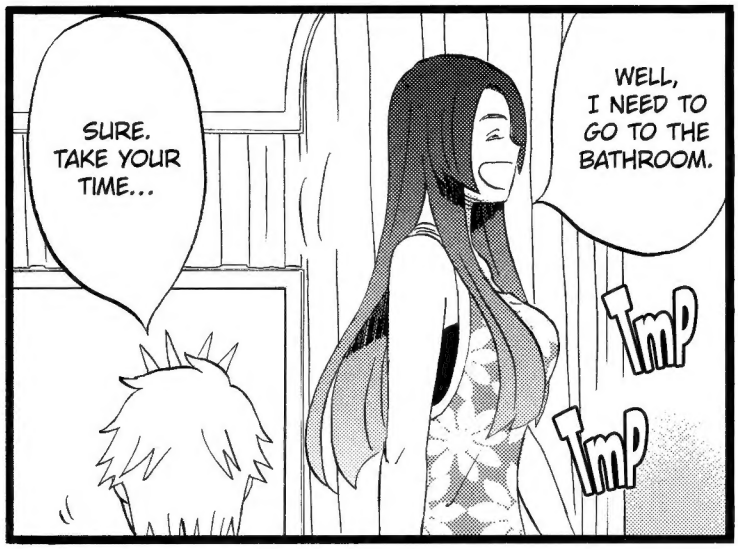
WHEN SAIGA-SENSEI ASKS YOU OUT FOR A DRINK IN THE FUTURE, INVITE HIM TO OUR HOUSE.

AND. THAT. IS. WHY!

...I MUST SAY...
YOUR HUSBAND IS AN ABSOLUTE GENIUS...

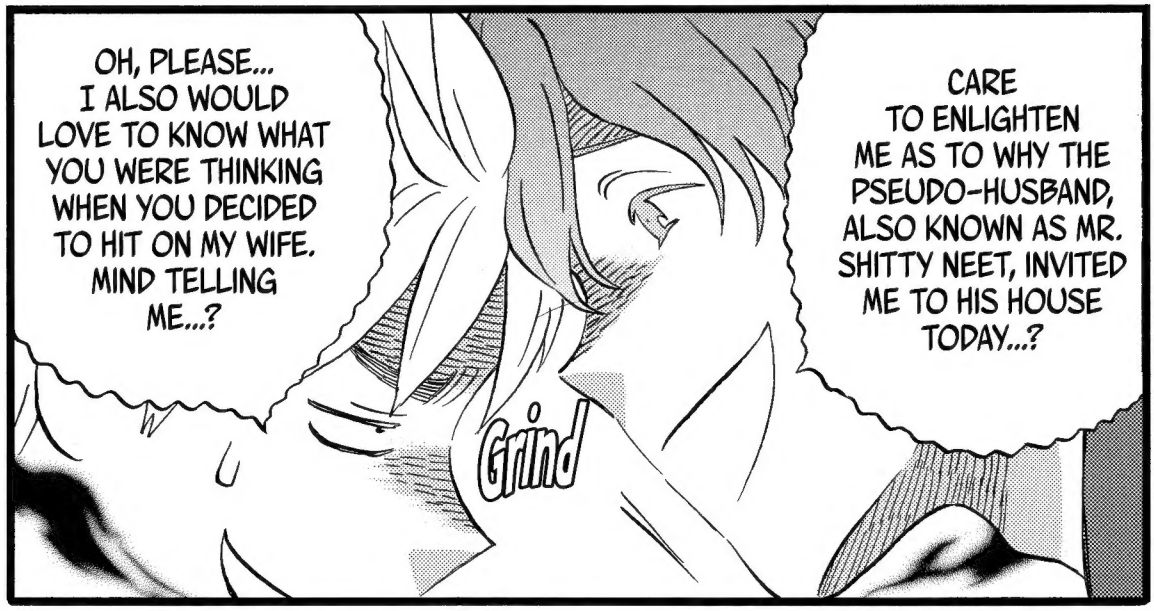

I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER BEEN SO HAPPY...
HA HA HA! YOU'RE WELCOME...
MUNCH
...
MUNCH

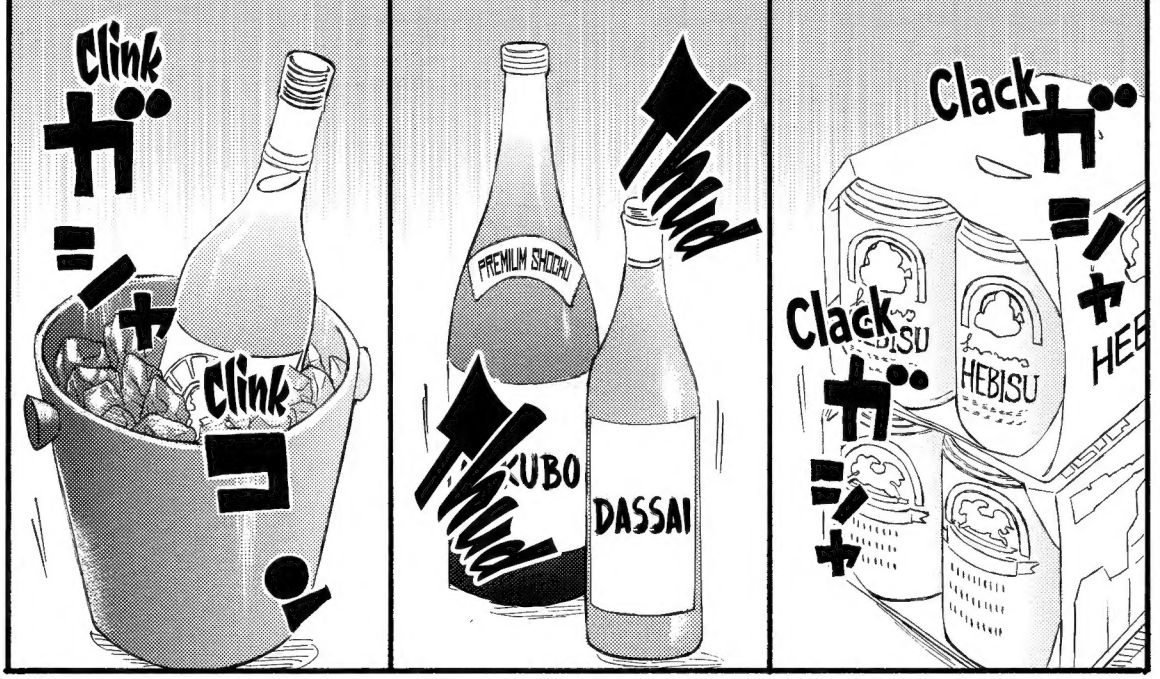
I WAS AT A LOSS FOR WORDS WHEN HE HAD THE BRILLIANT IDEA OF INVITING ME TO DINNER BEFORE...
Wow...
AND TODAY, I'M BEING TREATED TO HIS HOMEMADE FOOD?
It's delicious...


SURE. TAKE YOUR TIME...
WELL, I NEED TO GO TO THE BATHROOM.
Tmp
Tmp

HA HA HA HA HA!
I had no idea.
YOU GUYS GET ALONG SO WELL!

Slam
...
Clatter
SO...


OH, PLEASE... I ALSO WOULD LOVE TO KNOW WHAT YOU WERE THINKING WHEN YOU DECIDED TO HIT ON MY WIFE. MIND TELLING ME...?
CARE TO ENLIGHTEN ME AS TO WHY THE PSEUDO-HUSBAND, ALSO KNOWN AS MR. SHITTY NEET, INVITED ME TO HIS HOUSE TODAY...?
Grind


Clink
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PREMIUM SHOCHU
KUBO
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HEBISU
HEBISU

THE ONE WHO GETS WASTED FIRST LOSES. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
OHHH? SO THAT'S YOUR PLAN, HUH? I KNEW IT.
...

IN THE NEXT CHAPTER OF LA LA LA... WHO WILL EMERGE VICTORIOUS?